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FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0483
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA 0194
RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 0076
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0003
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 0628
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA 0173
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0085
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0068
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA 0122
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0196
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0340
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 0308
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UNCLAS SARAJEVO 000834

DEPT FOR CA/EX, CA/FPP, CA/VO, AND EUR/SCE (MIKE FOOKS); DEPT ALSO
PASS TO KCC; POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS; VIENNA FOR DHS
MARLA BELVEDERE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [CPAS](#) [ASEC](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIAN MARRIAGE PATTERNS THROUGH THE EYES OF SARAJEVO'S
CONSULAR SECTION

[¶1.](#) (Summary) After almost two years of Immigrant Visa operations
in Sarajevo, our consular staff is beginning to see standard
behavioral patterns that while not necessarily indicating fraud, do

exemplify both a very utilitarian approach to finding a partner, and
the strengths of traditional roles in Bosnia Herzegovina. (End
Summary).

[¶2.](#) In the twenty-one months of Immigrant visa services in Sarajevo,
our line officers and fraud unit have made some observations about
immigrant visa processing, specifically of CR-1 and K-3 cases. These
findings might be of interest to other IV issuing posts. Our
methodology is not technical, it is simply anecdotal observation by
line officers and the fraud unit.

[¶3.](#) The largest concentration of Bosnian immigrants to the U.S. is
in the St. Louis, Missouri area. In addition there are heavy
concentrations in the Northeast in places such Utica, New York or
Revere, Massachusetts, and there are also sizeable groups in
Waterloo, Iowa, and Lawrenceville, Georgia. In total there are an
estimated 250,000 residents of Bosnian origin in the U.S. We have
seen petitions filed from almost every state of the union.

[¶4.](#) The overwhelming majority of petitioners are males who on
average are about 5-20 years older than the brides. Most of these
petitioners were war refugees and are entering into their first
marriage. We have not seen any evidence of divorce after green card
receipt, then remarriage after citizenship acquisition.

[¶5.](#) Beneficiaries know which family members are living with the
petitioner, but interestingly, have little knowledge of the earning
potential of the petitioners. Affidavits of Support, tax returns
and employer letters identify a trend that most of the petitioners
are low wage or blue collar workers living with family members and
working in the construction or trucking industries. Many have jobs
as packers or on assembly lines in the USA.

[¶6.](#) Our informal inquiries reveal that many of the future marriages
start with relatives introducing eligible partners at weddings or
birthday parties when they are on holiday in Bosnia. And, first
meetings are often made shortly after landing. Within a month a
marriage (usually) takes place and the American citizen departs. We
have seen no evidence of marriage brokers, or internet sites that
offer partners. There seems to be little if any coaching for
interviews.

[¶7.](#) New brides almost universally move into the in-laws' house and
wait for the visas to be processed. And, it seems that they are put
in charge of the kitchen. The in-laws apparently can then keep a

watchful eye on the bride over the course of the visa process. New brides are also sometimes the only family member assisting the elderly in-laws. Ironically, the in-laws can have spent more time with the bride than the petitioner.

¶8. Little hard evidence exists with these relatively spontaneous relationships. With limited photographic evidence, and sometimes scant knowledge about the petitioner from an all too brief courtship, one is left not only wondering if these are bona-fide marriages, but what evidence can be sought. The most common evidence of a relationship is transfer of fund receipts and phone records. Some emails are printed, there are some cards or letters, but almost universally the cell phone seems to be the favored source of cross-boundary communication.

¶9. Are we going to see in two years a lot of divorces, or are the bonds that have caused what appear to be very utilitarian marriages strong? The majority of cases fall into what appears to be in the category of an isolated Bosnian-American returning to his native land to find a woman accepting of a traditional male-dominated home. Much of Bosnia seems to still be very traditional and religion is a driving force. Few of the marriages we see are between different ethnic or religious groups.

Cefkin